



## Security Council

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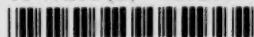
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### **Letter dated 8 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement by an official representative of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 7 December 2000 in connection with the introduction by the Russian Federation of a visa regime on the border with Georgia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* S. Lavrov



**Annex to the letter dated 8 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Security Council**

**Statement by an official representative of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

According to information from the competent Russian bodies, following the introduction on 5 December 2000 of a visa regime with Georgia, the situation at the crossing points on the Russian-Georgian border has remained calm, and no incidents or illegal acts have been noted. Citizens of the two countries are obtaining visas in an orderly manner.

The Russian side is taking all necessary measures to reduce to a minimum any possible inconvenience arising in connection with the introduction of the visa regime between the Russian Federation and Georgia. In particular, there are plans to propose in the near future to the Georgian side the opening of additional Russian consular offices in the territory of Georgia in order to enable Georgian citizens to obtain Russian visas in a more convenient manner. It is our hope that Tblisi will give all due attention to these constructive proposals.

In introducing the visa regime with Georgia, the Russian Federation acted in strict accordance with the norms of international law. Only the lack of readiness on the part of the officials in Tblisi to undertake mutually acceptable agreements for properly ensuring the security of the Russian-Georgian border prompted Moscow to take unilateral measures. At the same time, the Russian side remains open with regard to the talks, which can be continued at any time as soon as our Georgian partners are ready for this.

In this connection, the attempts to depict the Russian Federation's legitimate actions to ensure its security almost as interference in the internal affairs of Georgia cannot but cause amazement. Such speculation is being spread not only in Tblisi, where they would like in this way to mask their unconstructive position at the talks, but also in certain Western capitals which, when they deem it necessary, themselves tighten up their visa regimes.

In actual fact, the Georgian leaders know very well that the Russian Federation continues to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and favours the development of good-neighbourly, mutually advantageous relations that take into account each other's interests. The introduction of the visa regime in no way affects these fundamental principles.

The Russian side has always stressed that it is not interested in creating any artificial complications for contacts between the peoples of our countries. Precisely for this reason, until the Georgian side is ready to undertake mutually acceptable agreements, it has been decided to introduce a visa regime in those sectors of the border which are causing the Russian side particular concern with regard to the infiltration of terrorists and their accomplices. In those sectors where the situation is such that the regime in effect earlier can be maintained, it has not been changed so as not to disrupt contacts between people and in order to promote cooperation in the border area.

Moscow would like to hope that a constructive and balanced mood will prevail in Tblisi. This would make it possible, as a result of the talks, to take decisions that would dispel the present concern that has made it necessary to introduce the visa regime.

7 December 2000

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